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ABSTRACT

Activity learning strongly complements the idea of career education. Both have particular application to the high school, which is the most likely arena of educational change for the balance of this decade. In career education itself, school-based models are being tested in six cities and some 85,000 children are now participating in at least some career orientation activities. Four sites have been chosen for the employer-based model, which offers a new setting for academic studies and keys them to job experiences provided by a consortium of local employers. The third model, the rural-residential, enables low-income families in Montana and five neighboring States to learn new skills for better jobs, more effective homemaking, or further education. Still in the planning stages is the fourth model, a home-community effort that would use television and radio programing to encourage unemployed or underemployed adults to take advantage of local retraining programs. Adult education is certainly among our principal priorities for the 1970's. Other activities include development of instructional programs in career clusters, study programs for career education teachers and administrators, and 200 career education demonstration projects. All in all, our record in 1972 is presentable, encouraging in some aspects, and adaptable. (Author/MF)

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CAREER EDUCATION: A REPORT*

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As you might expect, I am finding the discussions and exchanges of this conference deeply interesting and profoundly encouraging. Action learning is a compelling answer to the plight of adolescent America --- that halfway stage physically and emotionally, normally filled with confusion and uncertainty, but made so much worse in both personal and economic terms by the seeming detachment of the adult world from the concerns of the young. To find the source of the alienation that is turning young people away from the establishment --- away from our world --- we need look no further than the bright, bored, socially concerned, jobless teenager or young college graduate and try to see things as he or she sees them. This conference on American Youth in the Mid-Seventies strongly suggests that you have come to grips with the issue, difficult though it is. I congratulate you.

I am also pleased because action learning strongly complements the idea of career education. While the general reaction to career education has been favorable since I broached it at the NASSP convention in Houston in January, 1971, there have been dissenters. Those who oppose the idea do so, they say, because they are apprehensive as to just what I have in mind and consequently fear the worst. To some of them, I am

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the Archie Bunker of education, bent on the Death of Intellect in the West. Just this morning, I understand, I was accused of downgrading all manner of intellectual pursuits including, of all things, the fine poetry of Langston Hughes. Now I must categorically deny that charge. I have not only read The Weary Blues --- I sometimes have them. In any case, I would like to point out in self-defense that among the 15 job clusters that have been identified for career education development is one encompassing fine arts and humanities, a cluster that includes poet, novelist, musician, and painter. We have no intention of turning any budding Langston Hughes into a machinist, but then neither do we intend to deny any machinist an appreciation of Langston Hughes's verse. Indeed, we think they should appreciate each other --- and in that mutual understanding begin to build a new universe of respect in which all talents, all skills, and all kinds of intellectual preparation and training are understood for the important places they individually hold in our complex and interdependent society. That is the heart of the career education idea, which some of our critics fail to see.

If you ask what I had in mind that January day in Houston when I first spoke of career education, let me assure you that it was not that the Office of Education, with my novice hand at the tiller, should immediately undertake a rejection of the liberal, humanistic tradition of education in favor of a strictly pragmatic, utilitarian approach focused entirely on employment and income. But what I was thinking of, and what I tried to

express, was my concern --- my fright, really --- at the continuing failure of the schools to serve fully a third of the young people attending them. I was concerned --- as those of you who have initiated action learning are obviously concerned --- with the swelling numbers of young American boys and girls listlessly, apparently helplessly, entering their names on the rolls of the unemployed, not because they lack talent, but because the schools have not given them a decent or fair preparation for the hard, competitive business of life --- including, of course, adequate job skills, but certainly not limited to that area. The apathy and alienation of many of our youn people are too profound and too pervasive to be said to be a matter of occupational unpreparedness alone. We have on our hands an entire generation of boys and girls who are rapidly becoming men and women --- and who fail to understand what they are to do when the transition to adulthood is complete. Inculcating that understanding is what career education is all about. And Langston Hughes, I assure you, is included.

Apart from the general notion that revolves around preparedness --- for work, for leisure, for the manifold opportunities open to each of us, in truth, human fulfillment intellectually and occupationally --- we have conscientiously avoided trying to lay down a precise definition for career education. Naturally enough, some have rushed forward to fill that vacuum. Academicians have tended to scoff --- politely, of course --- at career education as a "knee-jerk reaction" to the tightening up of the employment market, particularly for young people.

Jobs get scarce: therefore, the Federal Government decides that education in all its diverse parts should become a giant vocational training scheme. Of course, they are wrong.

And too often, I think, the vocational educators themselves have seized the idea in a very narrow sense, believing that their day has come and that, indeed, career education does mean that all education will become vocational in nature, or something very like it. They too are wrong and I quickly add that the most thoughtful vocational education leaders agree that vocational education is an important part of career education, but only a part. Walter Reuther once said, "Vocational education must abandon the traditional concept of job training and must take on the responsibility of preparing youths --- boys and girls alike --- for maximum adaptability in an economy in which job and skill demands will continue throughout their lives to be in rapid evolution." Yet the tendency among both academic and vocational educators has been to do precisely the opposite --- not to modify their traditional conceptions of educational practice in the light of swiftly changing needs and expectations,but to clutch them in a defensive reaction, perpetuating the divorcement between things occupational and things intellectual.

If there is a central message in our conception of career education, it is to cry out against this absurd partitioning of the house of education, this separation of subject from subject, of class from class, this false and destructive distinction between the liberal academic tradition on the one

hand and the utilitarian-vocational tradition on the other. Our search for reform and for elevation of the world of work must not be translated into a know-nothing, indiscriminate anti-intellectualism. Much of what has been carefully reasoned and properly taught since ancient Greece and before must be preserved. But much must be constantly re-examined for its usefulness in equipping well-developed people.

Alfred North Whitehead, an educational leader of this century with unimpeachable classical credentials, had this to say: "The antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is fallacious. There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which is not technical: that is, no education which does not impart both technique and intellectual vision. In simpler language, education should turn out the pupil with something he knows well and something he can do well."

And James Conant distinguished chemist and teacher, president of Harvard, ambassador, and truly a man of many seasons, wrote in 1961 in his book, Slums and Suburbs: "I must record an educational heresy, or rather support a proposition that many will accept as self-evident, but that some professors of the liberal arts will denounce as dangerously heretical. I submit that in a heavily urbanized and industrialized free society the educational experiences of youth should fit his subsequent employment. There should be a smooth transition from full-time schooling to a full-time job, whether that transition be after grade 10 or after graduation from school, college, or university."

Both Whitehead and Conant recognized that education, divorced from its proper ends and uses, must wither into ir-

relevancy --- not only as a discipline and a profession, not only as an instrument for occupational training, but also and most critically as the essential source of democratic life. Education that is class-conscious, separating collars by color, cannot be a source of equality but of divisiveness, inevitably weakening and blurring the mutual respect and understanding upon which American society is intended to stand.

Career education, then, in the broadest, most philosophical sense, is really a change of mind and a change of heart. It is a humbling exercise, for it must inevitably extract from us the admission that we have sought to serve the institution of education with greater zeal than the young people themselves, that we were more anxious to preserve the status quo than to seek the necessary measure of change, and above all that we were guilty of professional snobbery in dividing our children and our curriculums according to abstract and convenient concepts rather than mixing and combining the elements --- those who learn and that which is learned --- according to apparent need. I asked you two years ago to set aside the general curriculum in our high schools, and to erase the snobbish distinction between the vocational learner and the college preparatory learner. Nothing has happened in these two years to change my views.

I am particularly happy that the Office of Education has been of some assistance in the sponsorship of this conference because I believe that the action learning concept is a product of precisely the kind of frank self-evaluation that career education demands. As Bob Havighurst, Dick Graham, and Donald

Eberly have pointed out, "The existing combination of secondary schools, community colleges, job opportunities, military service, and early marriage has failed to meet the needs of several million young people." And they add, "The indications are that it will do less well in the future and that some basic changes are needed in American secondary education."

Action learning and career education both have particular application to the high school, which is, by all accounts, a troubled institution and the most likely arena of educational change for the balance of this decade. While there is dissatisfaction, frustration and a readiness for change throughout all of education, the opportunities for reform are especially timely in high school. Here for many young men and women childhood ends and adulthood begins, including parenthood, the ballot, and the responsibilities of a job. As students, their role in a traditional setting, as Jim Coleman says, is a passive one, "always in preparation for action, but never acting." Considering that by early 1972 unemployment among Americans 16 to 20 years of age totaled 1,350,000, we need to ask serious questions as to just how suitable their preparation for action is.

Consistent with the thrust of this meeting, a panel of distinguished scholars and educational practitioners are at work under the sponsorship of the Office of Education, with John Henry Martin as chairman, to analyze the problems involved in adolescent education and to produce policy recommendations in much the same manner as the Newman study group analyzed and recommended in the area of higher education. I believe that Dr. Martin's panel will have an impact on secondary education

comparable to that stimulated by the Newman study in our colleges and universities. As work goes forward on preparation of the report, which is due sometime in the spring, I am happy to note that occupational training and preparation has surfaced among the committee's most critical concerns.

In any case, I anticipate that the Education Division of HEW --- comprised of OE and the National Institute of Education --- will be deeply involved in the further development and implementation of action learning because it represents a healthy trend toward reality in teaching and learning. Action learning parallels in this sense other activities of the Federal Government such as the Career Opportunities Program which offers a career to people who have never had one. This year more than 8,000 men and women are working part-time in neighborhood schools as classroom or library aides as part of their training under COP. All come from low-income circumstances and work with disadvantaged children they know and understand. Many are Vietnam veterans who might otherwise have landed on the streets. While working as aides, all participants are enrolled in teacher-preparation or related programs in local colleges and universities. Many will undoubtedly earn a degree, become certified teachers,. and enter a professional world which otherwise would very likely have been closed to them.

I see action learning eventually producing the same kind of entree into a work situation --- in education perhaps or in other areas of the public and private sectors --- to guide the young man or woman toward a worthwhile and fulfilling pro-

fessional career. If our children need anything today, they need objectives, some place to go, something to be, a sense of control over their destinies --- and action learning will help them to form useful goals through the disciplined and reasoned discharge of small but nevertheless very real responsibilities of the kind that were once widely available to children in this country but have virtually disappeared from our prepackaged, mechanized, punch-card era.

Turning for a moment to career education itself, I can report to you that the Office of Education --- and now the National Institute of Education --- are deeply and productively engaged in furthering development of the design components and preparing to help the States and localities install model programs throughout the country. During Fiscal Year 1972, OE supported a number of initiatives, including the use of some $15 million to fund the development of four pilot models. When tested and validated in pilot schools and other training sites, these models will be made available for application in any ways practitioners see fit. Six cities --- Mesa, Arizona; Los Angeles; Jefferson County, Colorado; Atlanta; Pontiac; and Hackensack, New Jersey --- were selected to test the school-based model and some 85,000 children in these systems are now participating in at least some career orientation activities. Four sites --- Philadelphia; Charleston, West Virginia; Portland, Oregon; and Oakland, California --- were chosen for the employer-based model. This model offers a new setting for academic studies and keys them to job experiences provided by a consortium of local employers such as banks, printing plants, travel agencies, labor union offices, and so on. Some 50 high school seniors in each pilot city are enrolled in first

year's prototype. If the experiment shows promise, we will build on these small numbers.

A former Air Force base near Glasgow, Montana is the pilot site for the third model, the rural-residential. This model enables low-income families from Montana and five neighboring States to train for six to 18 months. Each member of each family learns new skills, whether for better jobs, more efficient homemaking, or further education. As of October, over 100 families were in training in Glasgow.

Finally, and still in the planning stages, is the fourth model, a home-community effort that would use television and radio programming to encourage unemployed or underemployed adults to take advantage of local retraining programs. The obligation of America's educators to provide equality of opportunity is particularly binding in the case of these millions who have grown to adulthood and now experience the cruelest kind of deprivation because it is --- or has been --- without hope. Adult education at home, on the job, in a community center or wherever it is most convenient or effective, is certainly among our principal priorities for the balance of the 1970's.

Responsibility for further research and development of the Career Education models was transferred in August to the National Institute of Education, OE's new sister agency created by the Education Amendments of 1972. While NIE assumed the career education research initiative, OE continued major efforts to revise curriculum, train teachers, and extend demonstration projects --- and this activity will be

carried forward as a major operational concern of the new Deputy Commissioner of Occupational and Adult Education, also created by the '72 Amendments.

For example, I think it is worthy of note that during this past year the staff of the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education --- which will be folded into the new Occupational Deputyship --- divided the 20,000-plus career categories identified by the Department of Labor into 15 broad career clusters. A number of the country's top curriculum specialists were given contracts to develop instructional programs for the first five --- construction, manufacturing, transportation, public service, and communications and media. Pilot testing of these programs is scheduled for the 1973-74 school year.

In the National Center for the Improvement for Educational Services --- OE's teacher-training center --- nearly $7 million went into training teachers and other staff in career education concepts. Some 250 vocational teachers and administrators from 56 States and territories received support for full-time Ph.D. study and, on a broader scale, States and territories received support in assessing their teacher-training needs and in developing study programs for at least 7,000 career education teachers, teacher educators, and administrators.

Nearly 700,000 children in elementary and secondary school participated in 200 career education demonstration projects supported with $17 million under the Vocational Education Act. Another $17 million under the same authority was channeled

directly to the States which used a significant portion of this money to enable selected schools to initiate career education planning and installation.

All in all, I think the record of our activity in 1972 is presentable, distinctly encouraging in a few of its aspects and, what is most important, readily adaptable to the new organizational structure of the Education Division of HEW which will take full effect in 1973. I assure you that as Assistant Secretary I intend to use every possible occasion --- as I have tonight --- for some gentle proselytizing. Though it may sometimes not seem obvious, we in the Federal Government do recognize that education is basically a State and local responsibility and that career education, as indeed any educational reform, will succeed only to the degree that State and local officials and supporters of the schools accept its worth and press for its adoption. That is why we have shunned any hard and fast definitions or limitations as to what the concept may ultimately be. We will continue to try to steer the career education notion, but giving it elbow room as much as funding.

At times during the past two years I have wondered whether our message was getting through, as more and more people said, "Tell us exactly what career education is so we can do it." But, in my judgement, developing such a constraining definition at this point would be the best way to kill the whole idea.

This conference --- and related activities taking place throughout the country within the broad parameters of the

career education idea --- reinvigorate my confidence that the ultimate definition of career education will emerge from those who are to make it work, and the final shape it assumes may be far different in San Antonio than Boston.

The message of career education is coming back to us in Washington, louder, clearer, better defined, more promising of results. Our resolve is freshened and our commitment is deepened --- much beyond that maiden speech before the Secondary School Principals in Houston two years ago.